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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARTO 113007

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TAGS: [OVIP](#) [CLINTON](#) [HILLARY](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#)
PARM, MOPS, ECON, EAID, KMCA, KNNP, MCC, RP
SUBJECT: (U) Secretary Clinton's November 12, 2009,
Meeting with Philippine Foreign Secretary Romulo

11. (U) Classified by: Kin W. Moy, Deputy Executive
Secretary, S/ES, Department of State. Reason 1.4 (d).

12. (U) November 12, 2009; 1:30 p.m.; Manila,
Philippines.

13. (U) Participants:

U.S.
The Secretary
Ambassador Kristie A. Kenney
Ambassador Scot Marciel, EAP DAS
Deputy Chief of Staff Jake Sullivan
Deputy Chief of Staff Huma Abedin
DAS Philippe Reines, PA
LTGEN Paul Selva, JCS
David Greenberg (Embassy Notetaker)

PHILIPPINES
Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo
Secretary of National Defense Gilberto Teodoro
Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Office of the
President
Undersecretary Enrique Manalo, DFA
Undersecretary Rafael Seguis, DFA
Ambassador to the United States Willy Gaa
Ambassador Libran Cabactulan
Assistant Secretary Evan Garcia, DFA
Assistant Secretary Lourdes Yparraguirre, DFA
Deena Amatong (DFA Notetaker)

14. (C) SUMMARY. Foreign Secretary Romulo and Defense
Secretary Teodoro briefed Secretary Clinton on damage
from recent storms and thanked her for USG assistance.
The Philippines' lead peace negotiator explained his
work toward concluding by June a comprehensive peace
agreement with the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation
Front (MILF). Responding to Philippine concern,
Secretary Clinton said she hoped the Millennium
Challenge Corporation (MCC) would prove flexible enough
to take into account the recent devastation in the
Philippines when considering its candidacy for MCC
Compact partner status. Secretary Clinton outlined USG
non-proliferation goals, and the Romulo welcomed close
coordination on the subject. Secretary Clinton outlined
USG moves to address climate change and noted that the
upcoming UN conference on climate change could lead to
the establishment of a financial mechanism for assisting
developing countries' environmental initiatives.
Secretary Clinton acknowledged Philippine progress on
counterterrorism and encouraged further steps to prevent
extrajudicial killings. Secretary Clinton and
Ambassador Marciel urged continued Philippine
cooperation to press the Burmese government to hold a
credible dialogue with the Burmese opposition and urged
Romulo to consider the merits of the Hague Convention on
the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. END
SUMMARY.

DISASTER RELIEF

15. (C) Foreign Secretary Romulo opened his bilateral
meeting with Secretary Clinton by inviting Secretary
Teodoro, who headed Philippine disaster relief efforts,
to brief on damage from storms in September and October.
Teodoro explained that the storms had affected over 1.1
million families and caused damage amounting to 38
billion Pesos (approximately 808 million USD), 26
billion of which was in the form of damage to crops.
The Philippine government continued to operate 400
evacuation centers and provide air relief services to
isolated areas. Portions of the country remained
flooded, and further rains could still have a severe
impact.

16. (C) Teodoro explained that the government was
working with the UN to expand the scope of its earlier

international flash appeal for assistance and would also
establish public-private partnerships to work on
rehabilitation and reconstruction; private sector
involvement would help ensure public monies would be
well-spent. Both Teodoro and Romulo effusively thanked
the Secretary for relief assistance provided by the USG, with Teodoro singling out the JUSMAG-Philippines
Commander and also praising U.S. forces that had been
diverted from bilateral exercises to help flood victims.
Romulo noted that U.S. forces who had traveled from the
southern Philippines were the first to rescue people in
his flood-affected neighborhood.

17. (C) Secretary Clinton commended Secretaries Romulo
and Teodoro on their government's response to the
flood and said the USG would continue to consult with
the Philippines on the challenges it would face in
reconstruction efforts. Ambassador Kenney said the USG
continued to examine how it might assist, looking
particularly at environmental and health-related
technical assistance that could supplement the role of
the private sector and multinational banks.

SOUTHERN PEACE PROCESS

18. (C) DFA Under Secretary Seguis explained progress in the peace process with the MILF. Seguis, who chaired the Philippine government's peace panel, cited its July agreement to a cease-fire with the MILF, the September agreement on a framework agreement for the formation of an International Contact Group (ICG), and the October agreement on mechanisms to protect civilian populations. Seguis expected to travel to Kuala Lumpur for further informal talks with the MILF on November 16. He hoped those talks would allow the two sides to finalize their list of state participants in the ICG, and that subsequent discussions in December would include an exchange of drafts of a comprehensive peace agreement. The two sides were expediting their efforts with the goal of concluding a peace agreement before the June 2010 end of President Arroyo's term.

19. (C) Secretary Clinton asked whether the MILF would likely agree to provisions that would allow sufficient monitoring and verification. Seguis replied that he would need to see the MILF's draft before he could feel confident about such issues. While having rejected prior MILF demands for secession, the Philippine government was willing to provide expanded autonomy to areas currently under MILF control, but the MILF was pushing for more concessions, such as the designation of territorial waters and allocation of a greater share of natural resources. Seguis explained the Philippine government was willing to make concessions, but only within constitutional parameters.

MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE

10. (C) Executive Secretary Ermita reviewed the status of Philippine efforts to become an MCC Compact partner. He emphasized the Philippines had become eligible in 2008, but then, having risen in classification from a Low Income Country (LIC) to a Lower Medium Income Country (LMIC), it had failed by an extremely narrow margin to meet the higher standards applied to LMICs. Ermita urged that the Philippines be judged according to LIC standards. The Philippine government was currently working with an MCC team to assess projects for road development, information systems for government revenue collection, and the delivery of social services to poor areas.

11. (C) Secretary Clinton welcomed the Philippines' progress that had led to its rise to the LMIC category. She hoped the MCC's board would decide that the

Philippines could remain Compact-eligible, especially given that the devastation of recent storms would have a serious negative effect on national income. Secretary Romulo noted that the Philippine government had worked closely with MCC personnel and found them very supportive. He also thanked Secretary Clinton for other U.S. assistance, including nearly 200 million USD in benefits for Filipino veterans.

NON-PROLIFERATION

12. (C) Secretary Romulo praised the Obama administration's leadership on non-proliferation and said he looked forward to the Philippines chairing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference in May. He noted that Undersecretary Manalo was working with the NSC Coordinator for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, while Ambassador Cabactulan was working with Special Representative Burk. Romulo asked Secretary Clinton's advice on preparations, both for the NPT Review Conference and for the April nuclear security summit in Washington.

13. (C) Secretary Clinton welcomed Philippine efforts to date. It would be important to strengthen the NPT and broaden the international non-proliferation regime, she said. She especially hoped the Philippine government would use its leadership to keep the NPT Review Conference focused on global issues. Some governments would likely try to direct the Conference's attention toward the Middle East, and specifically on Israel. The USG was also concerned about the Middle East, and on the significant threats posed by Iran and, to a lesser extent, Syria; North Korea had also been a major proliferator of nuclear technology. But the Conference should consider broad issues not specific to particular countries, including the need for greater safeguards of nuclear materials, the need to prevent covert nuclear programs, and ways to enable countries to become peaceful generators of nuclear power.

14. (C) Secretary Clinton emphasized that the USG stood ready to provide the Philippine government with technical assistance in the run-up to the Review Conference, and the USG's top non-proliferation officials stood ready to assist in any way necessary.

CLIMATE CHANGE

15. (C) Taking note of the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December, Romulo invited Secretary Clinton to share her thoughts on climate change, which he stressed was an important issue for President Arroyo. Secretary Clinton explained that the U.S. Congress continued to work on a climate change bill, and, while this would not become law by the time of the Conference, its progress would show the United States' seriousness. The USG had already taken action in the regulatory arena, limiting car and utility emissions, and economic stimulus legislation included 89 billion USD for clean energy technology and environmentally-helpful retrofitting projects.

¶16. (C) Secretary Clinton said the Copenhagen Conference appeared likely to move not toward a legally-binding treaty, but rather toward a framework agreement, which could include countries voluntarily establishing obligations under their domestic laws. Developed countries had an interest in establishing financial mechanisms to assist developing countries with projects that would benefit the environment. The USG could provide other governments with ideas and technical assistance to help inform their efforts. Secretary Clinton stressed that many environmental initiatives would provide an economic boost, rather than interfering

with economic growth.

COUNTERTERRORISM AND HUMAN RIGHTS

¶17. (C) Turning to counterterrorism (CT), Executive Secretary Ermita noted that the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), based in the southern Philippines, had connections to Al Qaeda and had an interest in undertaking terrorist acts throughout the country. The Philippine government had found ASG improvised explosive devices but had prevented many attacks, thanks in part to provisions of the Philippines' 2007 Human Security Act. With strong interagency cooperation, the Philippine government had responded successfully to terrorist threats and had killed or captured many ASG leaders. The Philippine government was working to upgrade the capabilities of its lead CT unit.

¶18. (C) Secretary Clinton acknowledged the importance of CT and the threat posed by the ASG and other transnational terrorist groups. The USG wanted to continue and deepen intelligence-sharing and military-to-military cooperation with the Philippines. It was important, though, that CT efforts not take on a repressive character. The USG has been concerned with extrajudicial killings in the Philippines, Secretary Clinton said, acknowledging that the Philippine government had made progress in this area, leading to a reduction in the number of reports of abuses. She urged that the Philippine government give special attention to strengthening the prosecution efforts against those accused of extrajudicial killings. She also commended the Philippines on the successful visit to the Philippines of an International Labour Organization delegation in September; previous killings of Philippine labor activists had raised concerns.

BURMA

¶19. (C) Highlighting the recent inauguration of an ASEAN human rights mechanism, Secretary Clinton thanked Secretary Romulo for the Philippines' leadership within ASEAN, and for its support for Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK). The USG was adjusting its approach toward Burma in order that democracy might be able to take hold there. Ambassador Marciel said the Burmese government clearly aimed to marginalize ASSK and the opposition in 2010 elections. He urged that the Philippines join in encouraging the Burmese government to hold a meaningful dialogue with the opposition. Without such a dialogue, Ambassador Marciel said, elections in Burma would be neither credible nor legitimate.

¶20. (C) Secretary Clinton said the USG would appreciate ASEAN taking on a greater role in Burma, perhaps observing the 2010 elections. Secretary Romulo said the USG could count on Philippine support on Burma; President Arroyo had been very firm on this issue. Romulo also welcomed the USG decision not to lift existing sanctions on Burma.

CHILD ABDUCTION
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¶21. (C) Secretary Clinton raised the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. Explaining the USG was a party to the Convention and had championed it for years, Secretary Clinton stressed the importance of resolving custody issues in the best interest of the children. She urged that the Philippine government consider the merits of the Convention; Romulo said the Philippines would do so.

CLINTON